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1962/10/10

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

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Action

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Rec'd: October 11, 1962
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FROM: Paris

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TO: Secretary of State

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NO: POLTO 432, October 10, 9 p.m.

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ACTION DEPARTMENT POLTO 432, INFORMATION ATHENS POLTO 24.

Acting Greek Permanent Representative called on us October 9 to raise question regarding US policy re shipping to Cuba of which NAC ratified October 3. [Stated he was approaching US privately rather than raising matter in NAC meeting to facilitate quite exploration Greek concern. Referred specifically to US intention close all US ports to all ships of any country if any ship under flag of that country hereafter carries arms to Cuba. Questioned whether this action was either fair or effective. Asked whether it was fair to penalize all shipping of a friendly country if one scoundrel or recalcitrant carries arms. Expressed view this action would offer strong temptation to Soviets to seek to suborn one shipowner from NATO countries in order to draw down US punitive action and embroil NATO countries with US. Greek Government feels their strong approaches to shipowners have received a good response. As they have told us, they have no reason to believe Greek ships have carried arms or strategic materials to Cuba but they believe it is unreasonable subject them to this impending threat. Asked whether a formula might be devised recognizing possibility of exceptions to protect the innocent.]

We expressed appreciation for their action raising this question bilaterally rather than in NAC meeting. Expressed personal view no course of action so hard and fast that exceptions could not be made where circumstances merited. Unlikely, however, that desirable exceptions could be foreseen in advance

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in advance or formula devised to define admissible exceptions. Furthermore, we thought an explicit formula for exceptions would be a temptation to unscrupulous parties to attempt to engage in strategic trade within the formula as well as to try to stretch and extend the scope of any exceptions.

We pointed out that unqualified closing of US ports to which Greeks referred to applied only in case of shipment arms to Cuba and stressed strong feeling of US Government and people on subject of delivery arms to Cuba. Pointed out inconceivable to us that ally could be content with position where ships under its flag or ownership could carry arms to Cuba and suggested that if Greeks were unable at present to bar their ships from such trade they might want to get necessary government authority as they had in case of COCOM trade. Acting Greek Permanent Representative said Greek Government had gotten COCOM authority in time of Korean crisis and did not feel would be feasible to get such authority under present circumstances for control of shipping to Cuba even in case of arms. He reiterated, however, Greek Government certain none their ships carrying arms to Cuba.

We agreed report his question and solicit Department's reaction but reiterated doubt that exceptions could be formulated.

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